



## **'Divergent' stars weigh in on Chicago visit**

By Luis Gomez

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Shailene Woodley is known for her "alternative" lifestyle: The aspiring herbalist — who plays the rebellious protagonist, Tris, in "Divergent" — has said during interviews that she makes her own medicine and cheese and collects mountain spring water once a month.

How difficult was it for Woodley to maintain this lifestyle while filming "Divergent" in Chicago last year for three months?

"It was a little bit tricky, actually," Woodley said at the Chicago premiere of "Divergent" at Showplace Icon Theatre in the South Loop this month. "There was this one market (in Chicago) that was amazing, which is where I did all my shopping. It's a co-op. I found it online."

That's not to say Woodley didn't make time for the city's fine-dining restaurants. Upon arriving in Chicago in April she attended a cast dinner at Girl and the Goat with co-stars, including Theo James, Zoe Kravitz and Miles Teller; she also visited The Publican and Avec. And as far as sight-seeing goes, she did some walking around Millennium Park. Woodley also visited Navy Pier, but that was to film a scene with Tris' love interest, Four (played by James) in which they climb up the Ferris wheel.

"That was pretty spectacular," said Woodley. "It was fun — it wasn't scary. There was a full moon. It was so lovely and beautiful."

James made time for Blackhawks games while in Chicago, which were all the more exciting because of the team's Stanley Cup run. "I got really into it," James said on the "Divergent" red carpet. "I loved it. It made me wish I played hockey as a kid. ... I do (consider myself a Hawks fan), but I feel like a bit of a fraud because I'm English." During one game in June, James and his co-stars met and took a photo with Mayor Rahm Emanuel (who also attended the red carpet event). "I'm a fan of his," James said. "I think he's very cool."

Ansel Elgort plays Tris' brother, Caleb, in the film and will appear with Woodley again in "The Fault in Our Stars." Elgort said he got to know a different aspect of Chicago than some of his co-stars: the "L."

"I took the train a lot," Elgort said. "I'm from New York, so I like taking the subway. It makes me feel like I'm at home."

Amy Newbold was the lone Chicago resident among the main cast. The Roosevelt University alum plays Molly, who is a member of the same Dauntless faction as Tris and Four (one of five factions in the "Divergent" storyline). If you think Newbold's friends were constantly contacting her to see where the cast was filming and hanging out, you would be mistaken.

"My friends didn't care at all," Newbold said. "I have no friends who are at all interested in the movie, which is awesome. They're excited — I don't want to give the wrong impression — but none of them are 'Oh my gosh, we're going to stalk this.'"

"Divergent" filmed at Cinespace Film Studios, as well as Navy Pier, Pioneer Court, the old Chicago Defender building and the field at 600 S. Wells St. in the South Loop. Gov. Pat Quinn claimed the movie was expected to create 1,000 jobs and contribute \$30 million to the local economy.

The sequel, "Insurgent" (with a new director on board, Robert Schwentke), is scheduled to film this year in Atlanta and, most likely, Chicago. Author and Northwestern University alum Veronica Roth, who wrote the young-adult novels that the movie is based on, said she believes the decision to film outside of Chicago was due to tax credit reasons. Chicago film office director Rich Moskal backed up this sentiment.

"The state of Georgia film incentive gives producers credit for out-of-state expenditures, like actors and producers that come from Los Angeles," Moskal said by email. "As a result, those productions receive an even greater amount of money back. The Illinois incentive is very competitive, but only covers local expenditures (hiring local crew, talent, equipment rentals, etc). The Illinois incentive was designed for good reason: to maximize the utilization of local businesses, performers and crew. But true enough, it's not the biggest incentive out there. ('Divergent' studio) Lionsgate also shot 'The Hunger Games: Catching Fire' in Atlanta. They're very familiar with the location and the benefits of Georgia's film incentive. Many factors played into their decision, but ultimately they felt Atlanta was a good fit for the sequel.

"Final production plans are still in the making. It seems likely that some portion of 'Insurgent' will be filmed in Chicago, but nothing certain on when or for how long."

Because "Divergent" takes place in a dystopian society, Chicago appears decrepit and, to some extent, abandoned, in the movie. That Ferris wheel Tris and Four climbed? It's not functional. Still, Roth is optimistic the movie will entice "Divergent" fans to visit her hometown.

"I hope so," Roth said on the red carpet. "They should. It's beautiful. It does (look worn out on screen), but it still looks like Chicago — sort of like wasteland Chicago. In a dystopia, you could be painting a city as a bad place to be, but I think Chicago comes off pretty well."